

Amendments to the Claims

Please amend Claims 26, 29-31, 33, 34, and 36-40 and add new Claims 41-44.

26. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
performing hydrophilic treatment for making a surface of an intermediate transfer body hydrophilic by ~~processing through application of energy~~ applying energy to the surface of the intermediate transfer body;  
applying a liquid for reducing the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body that has become hydrophilic, the liquid reducing the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body having the surface on which the hydrophilic treatment has been performed;  
forming an image by ejecting the ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body having on which the liquid has been applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and  
transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body ~~onto~~ to a recording medium.

27. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface of the intermediate transfer body contains at least one of a fluorine compound and a silicone compound.

28. (Withdrawn) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface of the intermediate transfer body is formed of an elastic material with a hardness of between 10 and 100 degrees.

29. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the ~~processing for making the surface hydrophilic~~ treatment comprises by ~~processing through the application of energy~~ comprises plasma processing performed at an atmospheric pressure or at a pressure lower than the atmospheric pressure.

30. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the ~~processing for making the surface hydrophilic~~ treatment by processing through ~~the application of energy~~ is additionally performed.

31. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the liquid contains a component for coagulating a colorant of the ink.

32. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 31, wherein the component comprises metal ions.

33. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to claim 31, further comprising a step of applying a second wettability improving liquid for improving a wettability of the surface of the intermediate transfer body prior to applying the liquid.

34. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of promoting a removal of water from the ink on the intermediate transfer body prior to transferring the image onto to the recording medium.

35. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of cleaning the surface of the intermediate transfer body.

36. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising the steps of: performing plasma processing on a surface of an intermediate transfer body, ~~the surface being a non-ink absorbing surface~~, to make the surface hydrophilic; applying a ~~reactant~~ liquid for reacting with an ink on the intermediate transfer body ~~that has become hydrophilic by having the surface on which the plasma processing has been performed~~; forming an image by ejecting the ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body ~~having on which the liquid has been applied thereto, by ejecting ink~~; and transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body ~~onto to~~ a recording medium.

37. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising the steps of: performing plasma processing on a surface of an intermediate transfer body, the surface containing at least ~~any~~ one of fluororubber and silicone rubber, to make the surface ~~of the intermediate transfer body~~ hydrophilic; applying a liquid for coagulating a colorant of ink on the intermediate transfer body ~~that has become hydrophilic by having the surface on which the plasma processing has been performed~~;

forming an image by ejecting ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body having on which the liquid has been applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto to a recording medium.

38. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
applying a liquid for reducing the fluidity of ink on an intermediate transfer body that has become on which hydrophilic by processing through application of energy, the liquid reducing the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body treatment of applying energy to the intermediate transfer to make the intermediate transfer body hydrophilic has been performed;

forming an image by ejecting the ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body having on which the liquid has been applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body onto to a recording medium.

39. (Currently Amended) An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
applying a reactant liquid for reacting with an ink on an intermediate transfer body having a non-ink absorbing surface that has become on which hydrophilic treatment by plasma processing has been performed;

forming an image by ejecting the ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body ~~having on which the liquid has been applied thereto, by ejecting ink from ink jet printing means;~~ and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body ~~onto~~ to a recording medium.

40. (Currently Amended) An image forming method according to Claim 39, wherein the surface contains at least ~~any~~ one of fluororubber and silicone rubber, ~~and the liquid reduces the fluidity of ink on the intermediate transfer body.~~

41. (New) An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
applying a liquid for reacting with ink on an intermediate transfer body on which hydrophilic treatment by application of energy to the intermediate transfer body has been performed;

forming an image by ejecting the ink from an ink jet head on the intermediate transfer body on which the liquid has been applied; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body to a recording medium.

42. (New) The image forming method according to Claim 41, wherein the intermediate transfer body has a non-ink absorbing surface.

43. (New) The image forming method according to Claim 41, wherein the intermediate transfer body has a surface with releasability.

44. (New) The image forming method according to Claim 41, wherein the liquid contains a component for coagulating a colorant of the ink.